



414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401-1993



July 19, 2004

Mr. John Wachtler  
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board  
658 Cedar Street, Room 300  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Xcel Energy's Application to the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board for a Route Permit from the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board for a 345 kV Transmission Line from the Split Rock Substation near Brandon, South Dakota to the Lakefield Junction Substation near Lakefield, Minnesota, a new Nobles County Substation near Reading, Minnesota and a 115 kV Transmission Line from the new Nobles County Substation to the Chanarambie Substation near Lake Wilson, Minnesota**  
**MEQB DOCKET NO. 03-73-TR-XCEL**  
**Data Request No. 2**

Dear Mr. Wachtler:

In response to your June 29, 2004 letter requesting information for the above project, Xcel Energy has the following responses.

**Request No. 4.**

*Please explain specifically how the location of potential wind farm projects in the area affected the location of Xcel Energy's proposed Nobles County substation sites, if at all. Please also specifically explain, if possible, how potential wind farm projects in Fenton Township or other townships affected the location of Xcel Energy's proposed routes for the 115-kV transmission line, if at all.*

When determining the location of the Nobles county substation, we focused on areas that provided a reasonable connection for the 115 kV and 345 kV routes. We also kept the site near Buffalo Ridge, but did not pick any sites based on potential wind generation projects.

For the Chanarambie to Nobles County 115 kV transmission line siting, we kept the route near Buffalo Ridge since that is where the highest potential for additional wind generation projects is located. The Xcel Energy planning section identified a general area about 5 miles in diameter of where the Fenton substation may be located, but we did not have any information regarding specific locations of proposed wind generation projects.

## Request No. 5

*Please briefly describe any transmission line routes Xcel Energy reviewed but dropped from consideration as it prepared its route-permit application, and the reasons the routes were dropped. Please use maps where possible. For purposes of this request, I am not referring to the alternative routes that are listed in the route-permit application as "Not Used" or "Rejected," but other alternative routes, if any, you may have considered in your screening process but dropped for various reasons. For example, Section 4.2 of the route-permit application mentions that some potential routes were "dropped from consideration" due to proximity to homes or wildlife management areas used by large populations of waterfowl. The purpose of this request is to minimize spending unnecessary time during the scoping process reassessing routes Xcel Energy has already dropped from consideration for good reasons.*

When referring to routes dropped from consideration, we are usually referring to route segments, not an entire route. The "routes" described in Section 4.2 and Appendix E refer to the "Not Used" or "Rejected" segments you mention above. There were some potential routes that were looked at briefly, but not analyzed since they did not address our siting criteria. We briefly looked at routing the Chanarambie to Nobles County 115 kV line straight south from Chanarambie substation to the Alliant 161 kV line and I-90. However, this placed the line a considerable distance from Buffalo Ridge and the general areas where Xcel Energy wanted to site the Fenton and Nobles County substations and therefore, we did not study it. In addition, we limited our options for review to the east of the proposed 115 kv routes in order to minimize the number of state and federal wildlife areas the lines would cross.

There were several preliminary routes that were considered and rejected prior to the public meetings. They were not on maps shown to the public:

- Xcel Energy moved segment A-W1 from Erickson Avenue to Hesselroth Avenue (2 miles east): moved to provide a more direct route to the substation and to avoid additional homes
- Segment E2 originally went north on King off of 266 then west on 140<sup>th</sup>. It was changed to go north on Knauf Avenue: Moved to utilize more of Hwy 266 and to move away from natural resource areas to the east
- Xcel Energy rejected a segment that ran diagonally from the southeast corner of Section 22, Twp 104, Range 42 up to the middle of the northern edge of Section 4 of Twp 104, Range 42: Few cross-country routes were considered since they would located poles into the fields.
- At the Murray and Nobles County border, Xcel Energy moved segment E3 from the east and north edges of Section 33, Twp 105, R42 to the south and west edges of the section: This minimizes the number of homes and waterways that need to be crossed.
- At the Murray and Nobles County border, segment W5 was moved from the east and north edges of Section 32, T105, R42 to the south and west edges of the

section: This was necessary due to the changes associated with segment E3 to keep the west and east routes as separate routes.

These routes were on initial maps shown to the public at public information meetings:

- Segment I7 was originally 1/4 mile south. Locating the line on the quarter section required new ROW and did not avoid homes any more than being on the road did.
- Segment T12 - see map B.27 in the application. The DNR had concerns about waterfowl (this is described in greater detail in Section 4.3 of our route permit application.
- AW1 was originally 1/2 mile east of Hesselroth Avenue but was relocated to the west once the landowners informed us that there were wind rights in the middle of those sections.

We will provide you maps showing these routes marked on them by July 23, 2004. Should you have any questions regarding this response, please contact me at 715-839-4661.

Sincerely,



Pamela Jo Rasmussen  
Permitting Analyst

C: Lisa Agrimonti  
Grant Stevenson  
Angela Piner